United Nations A/C.3/61/L.21/Rev.1

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
17 November 2006

Original: English

Sixty-first session
Third Committee
Agenda item 67 (b)
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

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Human rights and extreme poverty

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[2] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[2] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[3] the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[4] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination[5] and other human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations,

Recalling its resolution 47/196 of 22 December 1992, by which it declared 17 October the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, and its resolution 50/107 of 20 December 1995, by which it proclaimed the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), as well as its resolution 59/186 of 20 December 2004 and its previous resolutions on human rights and extreme

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).
[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.
[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.
[4] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.
[5] Resolution 2106 A (XX), annex.

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poverty, in which it reaffirmed that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them,

Recalling also its resolution 52/134 of 12 December 1997, in which it recognized that the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights was essential for the understanding, promotion and protection of all human rights,

Reaffirming the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Deeply concerned that extreme poverty persists in all countries of the world, regardless of their economic, social and cultural situation, and that its extent and manifestations, such as hunger, trafficking in human beings, disease, lack of adequate shelter, illiteracy and hopelessness, are particularly severe in developing countries, while acknowledging the significant progress made in several parts of the world in combating extreme poverty,

Also deeply concerned that gender inequality, violence and discrimination exacerbate extreme poverty, disproportionally impacting women and girls,

Recalling Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/16 of 14 April 2005,[6] as well as resolution 2005/9 of 8 August 2005 of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights,[7]

Welcoming the Summit of World Leaders for Action against Hunger and Poverty of 20 September 2004, convened in New York by the Presidents of Brazil, Chile and France and the Prime Minister of Spain with the support of the Secretary-General,

Recognizing that the eradication of extreme poverty is a major challenge within the process of globalization and requires coordinated and continued policies through decisive national action and international cooperation,

Stressing the necessity of better understanding the causes and consequences of extreme poverty,

Reaffirming that, since the existence of widespread extreme poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and might, in some situations, constitute a threat to the right to life, its immediate alleviation and eventual eradication must remain a high priority for the international community,

Reaffirming also that democracy, development and the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing and contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty,

Recalling Human Rights Council decision 1/102 of 30 June 2006,

1. *Reaffirms* that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them;

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[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 3* (E/2005/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[7] See E/CN.4/2006/2-E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/44, chap. II, sect. A.

2. *Also reaffirms* that it is essential for States to foster participation by the poorest people in the decision-making process in the societies in which they live, in the promotion of human rights and in efforts to combat extreme poverty, and that it is essential for people living in poverty and vulnerable groups to be empowered to organize themselves and to participate in all aspects of political, economic and social life, in particular the planning and implementation of policies that affect them, thus enabling them to become genuine partners in development;

3. *Emphasizes* that extreme poverty is a major issue to be addressed by Governments, civil society and the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, and in this context reaffirms that political commitment is a prerequisite for the eradication of poverty;

4. *Reaffirms* that the existence of widespread absolute poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and renders democracy and popular participation fragile;

5. *Recognizes* the need to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to address the most pressing social needs of people living in poverty, including through the design and development of appropriate mechanisms to strengthen and consolidate democratic institutions and governance;

6. *Reaffirms* the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[8] in particular the commitments to spare no effort to fight against extreme poverty and to achieve development and poverty eradication, including the commitment to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one United States dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger;

7. *Reaffirms also* the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit to eradicate poverty and promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all, including women and girls;[9]

8. *Reaffirms further* the critical role of both formal and informal education in the achievement of poverty eradication and other development goals as envisaged in the Millennium Declaration, in particular basic education and training for eradicating illiteracy, striving for expanded secondary and higher education as well as vocational education and technical training, especially for girls and women, the creation of human resources and infrastructure capabilities and the empowerment of those living in poverty,[10] and in this context, reaffirms the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000[11] and recognizes the importance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization strategy for the eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty, in supporting the Education for All programmes as a tool to achieve the millennium development goal of universal primary education by 2015;

9. *Invites* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to give high priority to the question of the relationship between extreme

[8] See resolution 55/2.

[9] See resolution 60/1.

[10] See resolution 60/1, para. 43.

[11] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

poverty and human rights, and also invites her to further pursue the work in this area;

10. *Calls upon* States, United Nations bodies, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to continue to give appropriate attention to the links between human rights and extreme poverty, and encourages the private sector and the international financial institutions to proceed likewise;

11. *Welcomes* the efforts of entities throughout the United Nations system to incorporate the Millennium Declaration and the internationally agreed development goals set out therein into their work;

12. *Takes note* of the reports of the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty[12] submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-first and sixty-second sessions and presented to the Human Rights Council at its second session;

13. *Decides* to consider this question further at its sixty-third session under the sub-item entitled "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

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[12] E/CN.4/2005/49 and E/CN.4/2006/43.